NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

FINDING THE RIGHT INDIGENOUS LEADER AND FORCE FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

by

David J. Hodges
Robert E. Lee Rowland

December 2011

Thesis Advisor: Anna Simons
Second Reader: Gregory Wilson

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

In recent decades, insurgents and other nonstate actors with their nontraditional styles of warfare have become significant threats to the U.S. and its allies. Failing to draw lessons from past conflicts has been a root cause of the misguided strategies implemented against insurgents in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Combating these insurgencies using a military-heavy strategy has proved to be a drain on both the U.S. economy as well as the military forces that have shared the burden of deployments since the onset of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. As a result, the U.S. should consider alternative strategies for dealing with insurgents that are both more tactically sound and less taxing on the economy and military. Using special operations forces (SOF) to establish local indigenous security forces in under-governed areas is one means of accomplishing this goal. This thesis focuses on the importance of choosing the right indigenous leader and force for U.S. SOF to partner with to defeat insurgents through the establishment of security, governance, and development at the grassroots level. A step-by-step process is described in this thesis that will assist SOF units in choosing the best local indigenous force leader (LIFL) and training him and his force. Also discussed is the importance of maintaining that partnership until the LIFL and his force are capable of operating on their own, and lines of support and communication have been opened with higher levels of the host nation government.

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COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS**

David J. Hodges
Major, United States Army
B.S., Methodist College, 2003

Robert E. Lee Rowland
Major, United States Army
B.A., Campbell University, 2000

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2011**

Author: David J. Hodges
               Robert E. Lee Rowland

Approved by: Anna Simons
               Thesis Advisor

               COL Gregory Wilson
               Second Reader

               John Arquilla
               Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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In recent decades, insurgents and other nonstate actors with their nontraditional styles of warfare have become significant threats to the U.S. and its allies. Failing to draw lessons from past conflicts has been a root cause of the misguided strategies implemented against insurgents in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Combating these insurgencies using a military-heavy strategy has proved to be a drain on both the U.S. economy as well as the military forces that have shared the burden of deployments since the onset of operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. As a result, the U.S. should consider alternative strategies for dealing with insurgents that are both more tactically sound and less taxing on the economy and military. Using special operations forces (SOF) to establish local indigenous security forces in under-governed areas is one means of accomplishing this goal. This thesis focuses on the importance of choosing the right indigenous leader and force for U.S. SOF to partner with to defeat insurgents through the establishment of security, governance, and development at the grassroots level. A step-by-step process is described in this thesis that will assist SOF units in choosing the best local indigenous force leader (LIFL) and training him and his force. Also discussed is the importance of maintaining that partnership until the LIFL and his force are capable of operating on their own, and lines of support and communication have been opened with higher levels of the host nation government.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALP: Afghan Local Police

AOR: Area of Responsibility

AQAP: al Qaeda Arabian Peninsula

AQ: al Qaeda

C2: Command & Control

CIA: Central Intelligence Agency

COIN: Counterinsurgency

FMF: Foreign Military Force

HN: Host Nation

LIF: Local Indigenous Force

LIFL: Local Indigenous Force Leader

LOO: Line of Operation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organizations

POI: Priority of Instruction

QRF: Quick Reaction Force

SOF: Special Operation Forces

USAID: United States Agency International Development

VSO: Village Stability Operations

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   PURPOSE

Since the beginning of the War on Terror, al Qaeda has displayed resilience at spreading radical Islamic beliefs across the globe, creating the need to confront it and the insurgencies that adopt its radical ideology.[1] When looking to spread its beliefs, al Qaeda most often targets groups of people that are disenfranchised from their government, and are thus easier to influence. Most often, these groups of people tend to reside in under-governed territories that are outside the control and influence of the central government. Geography is a primary factor when it comes to a government's limited span of control.[2] Many of the countries where al Qaeda has been able to gain support are poor and have limited financial resources; the outlying areas typically receive the least support. In most cases, there are stark differences in standards of living as one travels farther away from the capital city, with a lack of basic services becoming a leading cause of discontent. This has created an environment that suits the development of insurgent cells.

Ever since the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, the U.S. has taken a leading role in fighting the global war on terrorism. But, with limited military forces and resources, and ever-present financial constraints due largely to our own lagging economy, our ability to address more than a few al Qaeda threats at any given time is limited. Additionally, the heavy-handed tactics the U.S. is presumed guilty of utilizing in past and current counterinsurgency (COIN) conflicts has made a military-heavy approach less appealing to many foreign governments. Too often, the destructive and strong-arm tactics that are often synonymous with the U.S. do more harm than good by further alienating the population from the central government, which in turn plays into the hands of the insurgency. Countries look at the "puppet governments" we have created in Afghanistan and Iraq and want no part of those political disasters. They see the U.S. posing a threat to their legitimacy in the eyes of their countrymen and are much more

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[1] Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, February 2010.

[2] LTC Brian Petit, "The Fight for the Village," *Military Review*, May–June 2011: 26.

willing to accept our financial aid than permit any sizable U.S. military force into their country. As a result, policy makers and senior military advisors to the president have little choice but to explore other, more politically acceptable options. Ideally, those are options that are also more feasible given limited military budgets, and options that are more strategically sound for the overall conduct of COIN.

The purpose of this thesis is to identify how U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) can better choose, influence, and leverage indigenous force leaders in order to both counter existing insurgencies in under-governed territories and further U.S. and host nation (HN) security interests. It builds on the previously published NPS thesis "Rethinking Militias: Recognizing the Potential Role of Militia Groups in Nation-Building," which dispels the many negative connotations about militias and emphasizes the importance of the role these indigenous forces play in COIN.[3] Specifically, our thesis will explore the characteristics an indigenous leader and his force should possess in order to best meet the goals described above.

This thesis focuses on the training and employment of local indigenous forces as opposed to existing host nation security forces for a number of reasons. First, many of the under-governed areas that al Qaeda and its affiliates have rooted themselves in are historically tribal, with numerous factions existing within each tribe. Even HN security forces are considered to be outsiders by these tribes and factions and are often not welcome in villages they don't belong to. Secondly, insurgencies often exist in countries where the central government is seen as repressive, corrupt, and illegitimate, and where existing security forces are viewed as corrupt as well.[4] A third reason is that local indigenous people are more attuned to the habits and attitudes of people in their villages and are therefore in a better position to identify who and where the insurgents are. An example of this is Captain John Pershing's selection of Ahmai-Manibilang as the local indigenous leader during the Moro Wars in southern Philippines. Manibilang's influence and credibility are what allowed him, with the assistance of U.S. advisors, to unite the

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[3] MAJ Terry Hodgson and MAJ Glenn Thomas, "Rethinking Militias: Recognizing the Potential Role of Militia Groups in Nation Building" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2007), v.

[4] Daniel Byman, *"Going to War with the Allies You have,"* Strategic Studies Institute (2005): 12

fragmented inhabitants of his region into an organized local indigenous police force against the Muslim insurgents.[5] This is not to say that HN security forces do not have a role to play in COIN. But, it makes more sense to use them in areas where tribal ethnicities don't run as deep and where the population is not as disenfranchised from its own government. Lastly, it may be unrealistic to expect that most developing states in the world today will ever have strong, centralized governments with security forces that can maintain order throughout their sovereign borders.[6] In lieu of leaving these countries less than fully secured, HN governments may have to grant authority to local security forces that already exist and can help provide local security.

B.   THESIS SCOPE

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore how to identify, train and employ suitable indigenous forces in a COIN environment in order to achieve U.S. strategic goals while at the same time not threatening or weakening the power and control of the HN government. We will do this by defining the characteristics of the ideal indigenous force leader and his indigenous force. By paying attention to these characteristics, U.S. SOF should be able to better identify who the right indigenous force leader is and which is the better indigenous force for U.S. SOF to work with in order to further U.S. national security interests.

Investing heavily in finding the right indigenous force leader and force in the early stages of a counterinsurgency will increase the likelihood of long term stability being achieved between the indigenous forces and the central government. Initial research indicates that too little thought is put into determining which indigenous force U.S. SOF should partner with and how the force should be trained and employed. Thus, we include in our scope the development of a tailored training and employment plan for two different potential real world scenarios.

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[5] James R. Arnold, *The Moro War: How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle, 1902–1913* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 56.

[6] Ariel L. Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 132.

C. METHODOLOGY

The premise of our thesis is how to choose an indigenous force leader in countries where U.S. military involvement is limited by the HN government. In Chapter II, we will clarify what we mean by characteristics of a suitable indigenous leader and force. These characteristics will be broken down into two types: internal and external. Internal characteristics are those characteristics that make up the leader, what motives him, what leadership skills does he already possess, and whether these skills can be leveraged in order to meet the goals of the HN and U.S. External characteristics include the leader's relationship with the community, the local government, and of course the central government. With these characteristics in mind it is possible to identify and assess indigenous leaders and forces that U.S. SOF can partner with to conduct COIN and meet U.S. long term regional stability objectives.

In Chapter III, we will examine how to train and employ indigenous forces in a COIN environment with the goal of long term stability. This chapter will also emphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining good relations with the HN government and existing security forces. The fourth chapter will then explore how our research and ideas can be implemented in countries where insurgencies already exist. To do this we will present two likely scenarios and outline how U.S. SOF can best identify, train, and employ indigenous forces to counter the insurgency. For the first scenario, we will consider how U.S. SOF would do this in country "X," which has a weak government that is unable to deal with its existing rural insurgency, an insurgency that threatens U.S. objectives and interests. In contrast, the second scenario will consider how U.S. SOF might do this in country "Y," which has a moderate to strong government fighting a long-lived insurgency. In both scenarios, countries X and Y will only permit limited U.S. military intervention. Chapter V of this thesis will present the implications of our research and our conclusions.

There are an inordinate number of theories, models, and strategies that relate to waging effective COIN.[7] In general, the existing literature focuses primarily on empirical cases and analyzes which strategies worked and which did not[8] They also point to a number of political and military challenges with which the U.S. will have to contend when dealing with the HN government and security forces in several countries that are currently fighting insurgent groups.[9] Despite identifying political and military challenges, very few of these stress the importance of building the capacity of HN indigenous forces to perform the role of a security apparatus at the local level. To press the issue even further, the existing literature offers little substance about how to find a local indigenous force leader, let alone forge the kind of force that is best suited to take on the complex, dual role of simultaneously serving as both local security and as the political arm of the HN government.

By accepting a more visionary use of indigenous forces in under-governed areas it is our contention that the U.S. could decrease the number of U.S. forces required in a COIN conflict, permitting the reallocation of military forces and precious financial resources elsewhere, as well as permit the U.S. the flexibility to address other emerging global threats as they arise. It is for these reasons that we advocate that the U.S. accept the use of local indigenous forces in under-governed areas of the world where insurgencies exist, and that to do so it become much better at determining which indigenous forces to partner with in order to achieve its goals.

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[7] For a broad discussion of counterinsurgency, refer to: David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare Theory and Practice*; Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*; Robert M. Cassidy*, Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War*; John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup With a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*; Ian F.W. Beckett, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerillas and their Opponents since 1750*; L. H. Gann, *Guerrillas in History.*

[8] Andrew F. Kepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Washington DC: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

[9] Byman, "*Going to War With the Allies You Have,"* 2–3.

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II. INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD INDIGENOUS FORCE / INDIGENOUS FORCE LEADER

Conducting COIN is by all means a difficult and challenging task on every level. It involves an immense amount of thinking, learning, and consideration by the external military force helping to wage it. Not only does COIN require combating the insurgents, but also positively influencing the people who make up the society of the country where the insurgents exist. In the early stages of a COIN conflict and when HN security forces are inadequate to project force, it may be necessary for the external military force to assume the role of "Primary Counterinsurgent,"[10] whose responsibility is to disrupt and dismantle the insurgent infrastructure by targeting its leadership. Over time, however, that responsibility needs to shift to HN security forces as they become better trained and more capable of defending their communities and maintaining their own security. In the case of countries that are highly tribal and whose communities and villages are established along ethnic lines with distinct cultural norms, establishing local security at the village level is often already traditionally done. By choosing the most capable Local Indigenous Force Leaders (LIFL) to command these forces, the external military force can help ensure long term security and stability against insurgents at the village level. Options for narrowing down the search for LIFLs and developing the criteria for determining the most capable LIFLs will be further explored in this chapter.

A. WORKING THROUGH THE U.S. EMBASSY AND INTERAGENCY TO FIND THE MOST SUITABLE LIFL

Once the U.S. makes the decision to become directly involved in a COIN crisis, it is important to begin via interagency coordination through the U.S. Embassy. If a U.S. Embassy already exists in a country that is being targeted for a COIN campaign, chances are that interagency members of the Embassy already have persons identified who meet some of the criteria of a LIFL. Interagency personnel often spend years in an assigned

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[10] William Marm, Bryan Martin, Christopher O'Gwin, Gabriel Szody, Joshua Thiel, Christopher Young, and Douglas Borer, "Beyond FM 3–24: Readings for the Counterinsurgency Commander" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2010),1.

country and, in some cases, work closely with local power brokers who can be rather easily gauged for their willingness and ability to take on such a role. These relationships grant embassy personnel the ability to make more in-depth and accurate recommendations of potential LIFL nominees which can save valuable time.

In cases where there is no U.S. Embassy or when members of the Embassy are unable to assist, the task of identifying a LIFL can be more challenging. To help narrow down the search, the first thing to be determined is which regions are of strategic importance to the government and from where the insurgents are receiving the greatest active and passive support. These areas will present U.S. COIN forces the greatest opportunity to affect insurgent infrastructure and operations.[11] Things that need to be taken into account and questions that need to be asked when considering this are: 1) whether the locals are supporting the insurgents of their own free will or out of fear and intimidation;[12] 2) how open the locals are to the idea of a direct partnership with foreign forces to resist the insurgency;[13] 3) is there an existing shadow local indigenous force that has demonstrated a desire to resist the insurgency;[14] 4) what is the size and strength of the insurgency in this immediate area;[15] 5) what grievances exist among the locals that allow the insurgency to gain their support; 6) are the villagers principally or potentially pro-government;[16] 7) and, finally, are members of the insurgency considered foreigners from another tribe or are they members of the community?[17] By answering these questions the Foreign Military Force (FMF) can more accurately judge how receptive locals will be to the COIN support they can offer. Once these questions have been answered the COIN force can begin the process of assessing potential candidates to determine who should

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[11] Eric P. Wendt, "Strategic Counterinsurgency Modeling," *Special Warfare*, Vol. 18, September (2005): 9.

[12] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 216.

[13] Petitt, "The Fight For the Village," 28.

[14] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 25.

[15] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 13.

[16] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam*, 31.

[17] "Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency," Central Intelligence Agency (2011): 9, accessed April 9 2011, http://fas.org/irp/cia/product/insurgency.pdf.

serve as the leader of the security apparatus that will ultimately be responsible for protecting their community against insurgent influence.

Taking on the role of a LIFL is not a job to be taken lightly, especially if the leader is effective. The more effective the LIFL is at performing his duties and the greater the amount of support he is able to garner, the greater the risk he runs of being targeted by both the insurgents and a weak or paranoid national leader.[18] This creates obvious reasons for the LIFL to be less than fully committed to a job where the pay can easily be considered not worth the risk. What this in turn means is that when attempting to embed within a community where no local militias or localized security force yet existed, U.S. forces must be very cautious about whom they will choose. In some cases, consulting local governing bodies can be a good place to start when searching for a LIFL.

Tribal communities where government presence and control is nonexistent rely heavily on unofficial government leaders who make up local governing bodies.[19] Local elders, who are typically respected village powerbrokers, historically form these governing bodies to deliberate on various topics that influence their community. As such, the governing members should be given an opportunity to recommend or nominate who they want to lead their local security force. In addition to turning to local governing bodies as good sources of personal background information for assessing the validity of a nominee's claims and intentions, by granting those bodies the opportunity to make recommendations on potential LIFLs, outsiders would be displaying respect for their stature and authority, and would be giving them a sense of ownership and control over their community's future. This can amount to a critically positive show of faith by U.S. forces during the critical early stages of the partnership. Once the local governing body has spoken and persons have been nominated, U.S. COIN forces can then begin their own assessment of the candidates. Particular characteristics and qualities that should be

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[18] Cecil B. Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 85

[19] CJSOTF-A Staff, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police, Bottom-up Counterinsurgency* (Bagarm Airbase: CJSOTF-A, 2011), 7.

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considered important when conducting this assessment are many and can be difficult to evaluate, but taking the additional time at this early stage of a COIN campaign to do this can pay big dividends later on.

Accordingly, we have created something akin to a checklist that tactical units or other elements can reference when making their assessments. Additionally, by dividing the qualities or characteristics into two categories—Internal and External—the persons making the assessment can consider each one independently of the other. This may be especially important in cases where emphasis may need to be placed more on external rather than internal considerations (or vice versa).

B.   INTERNAL QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS

During the assessment of potential LIFL candidates, certain information about the individuals needs to be identified up front so that the most accurate and informative decision can be made by the assessing element. To do this the nominees need to be evaluated using a list of internal qualities and characteristics that will help determine who the right person is for the job. By internal qualities and characteristics we mean personal traits, preferences, and beliefs already inherent to a person. These internal qualities and characteristics are further sub-categorized into three areas: motives, personal qualities, and willingness to be leveraged by the supporting COIN force. Given the extenuating circumstances and constraints of operating in a hostile environment with little support, these qualities and characteristics must be carefully and accurately evaluated.

To assist the FMF during the assessment in theater, it must first acquire as much knowledge about the supported country and indigenous population as possible. This research will begin in the FMF's home country and continue throughout the duration of its partnership with their indigenous forces.[20] Areas of emphasis the FMF needs to focus on are the differences in indigenous tribes and sub-tribe dynamics. The FMF will also need to learn as much as possible about local ties and cultural intricacies of the different

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[20] John B. Alexander, *Convergence: Special Operations and Civilian Law Enforcement* (Tampa: The JSOU Press, 2010)

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tribes and how they feel about rival or neighboring tribes.[21] Some of this information will be difficult to obtain prior to having boots on the ground, and therefore must be collected as soon as possible once in-country. Having a better understanding of these particularities firsthand will allow the FMF to better gauge the motives of a LIFL and his force.[22]

1. Motives

The most important internal characteristic that needs to be evaluated is an individual's motives for wanting to take on the role of LIFL.[23] There is a great deal of risk assumed by taking on such an important and dangerous job, especially since it is not likely to produce the monetary reward that it deserves. Determining an individual's motivation for desiring such an inherently dangerous position will provide the person conducting the evaluation a better understanding of who would be best suited to assume the position over the long term.

Critical motivations to look for during the assessment are a consistent discontent with or hatred for the insurgents, their ideology, and their actions. This discontent could stem from a number of different causes, but the degree to which it is consistent is important. This is where conducting COIN in tribal regions can be somewhat complicated because there may be a dislike for the insurgents, but if both sides are from the same tribe, the dislike and discontent may not be consistent enough to inspire consistent actions against the insurgents. Another significant motivation to look for in a LIFL is someone who desires to make a better life for himself and his community without being oppressed by the insurgents. Someone who genuinely cares about the people, security, and future of his community and ultimately his country are also indicators to

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[21] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 30.

[22] Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 83.

[23] Department of Defense, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare (FM 3–05.130)* (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 2008), 4–18.

look for.[24] Such a person whose self-interest comes second to his community is the type who stands a better possibility of remaining loyal to those he will ultimately be selected to protect.

There are other motivations that evaluators should remain leery of that indicate a person desires such a position for the wrong reasons. Power and authority are typically standard reasons for someone seeking a leadership position, but what that person intends to do with that power and authority needs to be determined ahead of time. If a nominee appears to be in pursuit of personal interest and financial gain then he stands a high probability of falling victim to greed, corruption, and illicit activities like so many leaders and persons of authority before him.[25] Tolerance for corruption of this kind has to be limited because it often times ends up alienating the people whose trust and support must be maintained, thereby hindering efforts to build community cohesion.[26] For instance, corruption is one of the main points of contention that currently exists between the citizens of Yemen and longtime President Saleh. The discontent has recently risen to such a high level that citizens are in the process of carrying out a revolution to have the President removed from power. A similar hostile situation recently existed in Libya.[27] Aside from corruption and personal gain, if a LIFL nominee's motivations appear to be towards anything other than fulfilling his obligations to his community and its people, then that person should be considered only with great caution.

2.   Personal Qualities

When the thought of a good leader comes to mind most everyone can recall an influential person who was able to "influence people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization."[28]

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[24] Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 281.

[25] Major Andrew M. Row, "To Create a Stable Afghanistan: Provisional Reconstruction Teams, Good Governance, and a Splash of History," *Military Review*, Nov–Dec (2005): 22.

[26] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 27

[27] John Arquilla, "Obama, NATO Should Cut a Deal with Khadafy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 24, 2011, http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/04/24/inc4ijiv5a.dtl

[28] Department of the Army, *Army Leadership (AR 600–100)* (Washington D.C: Department of the Army, 2007), 1

Whether that recollected person was a leader of something as complex as a nation or something as simple as a high school football team, there are common personal qualities every leader should possess and project. Different circumstances call for different leadership styles and many leader qualities are consistent regardless of what that person is leading.[29] However, there are some distinct qualities that a LIFL should have in order not only to serve as a leader of the force he commands, but to be a conduit between his force, the local government, and the community they protect. Since implementing an effective COIN strategy even at the local level is difficult, the LIFL must additionally have the skill to juggle both the application of military force and diplomacy.[30] The following are several qualities, listed in no particular order that should be sought out and assessed of LIFL candidates.

A high degree of *competency* is required of any person taking responsibility for the lives of others. This competence not only has to apply to the duties and responsibilities of his position, but also to external factors such as the insurgents. The LIFL must be mentally competent in the knowledge and capability of his forces and his ability to organize and employ them in a military and diplomatic manner to effectively defend against the insurgents.[31] At the same time, he must also be competent and knowledgeable about his enemy so that he can anticipate their actions and stay one step ahead of them.[32] A leader should also be *trustworthy* and *reliable*, not only in the eyes of his men but also in the eyes of the community he is protecting. By being trustworthy he will more easily earn the respect of the forces he asks so much of. The more respect his men have for him, the more likely they will be to obey his orders no matter how dangerous the situation. As for the members of his community, the more they trust the LIFL and his forces, the more likely they will be to support them instead of the

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[29] Ian Gardiner, *In the Service of the Sultan: A Personal Account of the Dhofar Insurgency* (South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Books, 2006), 53

[30] Byman, *"Going to War With the Allies You Have,"* 7.

[31] Unknown, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, 9.

[32] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 84.

insurgents. Shifting the community's support from the insurgents back to the local government is the single most important element of carrying out a successful COIN campaign.

Many successful leaders have also become *motivators* and *catalysts* through the dissemination of their beliefs and ideology which helps them gain the critical backing of the forces they command and the population which they need in order to add strength to their cause and endure the challenges that lie ahead.[33] Charismatic leaders of this type have an effect on people by promoting a desire to do what is asked of them despite the hazards involved, of which there are many when conducting COIN.[34] Adolf Hitler is known as one of the greatest catalysts of all times. Even though his ideology and cause can be considered barbaric, he was still able to successfully gain the support of millions of Germans and mobilize them in an effort to rid Europe of all Jews.

Intuition is another strong internal personal quality that has permitted many great leaders to accomplish the impossible when the odds are not in their favor. A LIFL who is intuitive will better be able to prepare and employ his forces to sever the ties between the insurgents he is combating and the population he is protecting; this is a task that is very delicate and in the case of a well rooted insurgency, extremely challenging.

Another personal quality that can carry a leader to great lengths is his ability to be *rational* and of *fair and sound judgment*. Of no surprise, people with authority and power have to make countless decisions of significant impact on a regular basis. Any leader can make decisions based on his own experience and the suggestions of others, but it takes a rational leader to make those decisions soundly when under constant threat by an enemy that employs unconventional tactics in an attempt to end the lives of him and his men. Additionally, the decisions a LIFL has to make not only directly affect him and his men, but also indirectly affect the community he is protecting. An effective leader will have the foresight to identify many of the second and third order effects of his force's actions and make sound and rational decisions based on them. One way for a

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[33] Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias*, 32.

[34] Byman, "*Going to War With the Allies You Have,*" 11.

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leader to be able to better determine these second and third order effects is to be *empathetic* with the members of his community. By being culturally and personally empathetic, he will be able to earn and maintain their support and carry out the responsibilities of his position more effectively.[35]

Recent insurgents, such as those in al Qaeda and the Taliban, have sometimes demonstrated an ability to adapt and overcome their adversaries' tactics. Because of this, U.S. forces have had to perform more reactively than proactively. This has enabled the insurgents to keep one step ahead of our efforts to oppose them. The LIFL, by being more culturally attuned to his surroundings and empathetic to his people, is far more likely to be able to identify situations where he can seize the *initiative* and exploit the insurgents' weaknesses. When the LIFL and his forces continually seize the initiative from the insurgents, they force them to be reactive, which put them in situations where they are more likely to implode from a combination of their own mishaps and the efforts of the local security force. To do this, a leader must take a good deal of calculated risk into consideration as well as be daring in times of uncertainty. That is why the LIFL must also be a good listener and *open to suggestion* from local government officials as he synchronizes his efforts, as well as those of his subordinates when time permits. When a LIFL does this, it gives his forces a sense of ownership for the dangerous tasks they carry out and encourages critical thinking which also helps to build and professionally develop subordinates aspiring to become leaders themselves. Listening to the suggestions of local government leaders also helps ensure an equal application of both military actions against the insurgents and diplomacy with the population.

A leader's ability to *effectively communicate* is another personal quality critical to achieving the results he desires.[36] Too often problems are not resolved and, in some cases, made even worse because the problem itself and the intentions and directives of the commander were not correctly communicated to the subordinates responsible for its resolution. Effective communication also instills a sense of encouragement in ones'

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[35] Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2005), 141.

[36] Defense, *Army Leadership, AR 600–100*, 3.

followers that their leader is competent regarding a given situation and knowledgeable about how most appropriately to handle it. In extreme situations that may cause harm or heartache to those selected to carry out a particular task or operation, the leader must also be *skillfully persuasive*. Since it is likely a LIFL will ask his men to take risks on a regular basis, it is essential that he be persuasive to ensure their continual cooperation, commitment, and approval.

To create the appearance that an insurgency is bigger than it really is, especially in the early stages, insurgents will adopt terrorist-style tactics that by nature are immoral and unethical. Insurgents have a common habit of placing security forces in situations where they have to make split second decisions to kill the insurgents at the expense of civilian casualties. Opposing an enemy who employs these tactics tends to be difficult, dangerous, and resource-intensive for the security forces. In scenarios such as these, the LIFL needs to be both *moral* and *ethical* and implement costly measures to protect the members of his community and avoid the unnecessary loss of civilian lives. A LIFL who leads in this fashion will not only be able to put himself and his forces in a better position to undermine and erode the life of the insurgency, he will also set a positive example as a role model for his men and the community. [37]

C.   LEVERAGING THE LIFL

In regions of the world that are historically tribal as well as culturally and socially isolated from their neighbors, insurgents have been able to more easily control the population using coercive methods, especially when there is a lack of government presence in these regions. The inhabitants of these under-governed regions may want to resist the insurgents who control them, but may not have the means to do so. When an external government decides it is within its strategic interest to rid these regions of insurgents and partner with the locals to do so, it now presents the people of these regions with their opportunity. Establishing local security is an essential step in achieving regional stability, but it is not sufficient. In order to achieve regional stability there must

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[37]Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 82.

be a formal link between the local villages, through the districts, and up to the provincial and national government. This top-down and bottom-up approach will help to ensure synchronized security at all levels.[38]

For a host of different reasons a village security force and its establishing government may be reluctant or even opposed outright to synchronizing efforts beyond the community. Many of these reasons stem from tribal and ethnic differences, competition for power between neighboring communities,[39] the lack of a functioning government at all levels, and/or distrust in the central government brought on by oppression, greed, and corruption.[40] Reformation of the government may seem the only way to bring about needed changes, but where to begin becomes the issue. When resistance of this type exists it becomes paramount that the leader of the local indigenous force be able to be leveraged in a manner that will allow him and his force to overcome these aversions and see beyond the parochial interests of their community.[41] Reformation of a nation's government is no doubt a challenging task, but one that can be achieved more easily by simultaneous efforts from both the top-down and bottom-up.

It also becomes necessary to evaluate the LIFL for his willingness to be leveraged in cases where his interests are not exactly nested with those of the local government, and more importantly with those of the supporting COIN force's government. In war-torn countries where the nominees are likely to have been local warlords, their interests and motives may not always reach beyond themselves or their community.[42] In these cases, it becomes important that there be other ways to influence them.

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[38] Seth G. Jones, "Lecture on Village Stability Operations (VSO) in Afghanistan," presented as part of a lecture to the student body of the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, April 18, 2011.

[39] Katya Drozdova, *Mining Afghan Lessons From Soviet Era to Inform U.S../ISAF Leadership & Mission* (Washington, D.C.: Empirical Studies of Conflict, 2010), 3.

[40] Byman, "*Going to War With the Allies You Have,*" 18

[41] Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American,* 85, It was well known that Lansdale was able to significantly influence Magsaysay of the Philippines and Diem of South Vietnam during his relationship with them while they were both building democratic governments of their own.

[42] Seth G. Jones, *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, Counterinsurgency Study, Vol.4* (Washington DC: National Defense Research Institute (RAND), 2008) ,76–77.

Assessing the LIFL's willingness to be leveraged is, no doubt, one of the most difficult things the FMF will have to do; what makes this task even more difficult is to gauge the LIFL's willingness to be leveraged in a way that will benefit him as well as his force and community. This particular assessment will need to be readdressed throughout the relationship between the FMF and the LIFL because the LIFL's motives are susceptible to change as the he becomes more powerful and influential.

D.   EXTERNAL QUALITIES/CHARACTERISTICS

When assessing a LIFL you have to take into account the external factors that impact that leader and the force. By external characteristics we mean relationships between the LIFL and external entities that can have a significant impact on him and his force. These factors include: his relationship with the community he and his forces will be embedded within; his relationship with the local and central governments; his relationship with other regional players; rival tribes that reside in the territory he will secure; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO); and even the media. By considering these and other factors, the external force will be able to work with community leaders to find the best option for the LIFL.

1.   Relationship with the Community within which the Force is Embedded

No matter where you live, when you look at the force that provides your security you will find a well-established relationship between the security force leader, the force, and the community. How many times have you been to community functions where the keynote speaker was the local security force leader or the event was sponsored by the security force? Cases like this present great examples of a healthy relationship between the community and the LIFL and his force.

In areas where there is a local security force, the relationship between the community and the LIFL will need to be assessed to ensure that the LIFL and his force are working in support of the community and not against it. If the relationship is already strong, all the external force will need to do is observe the relationship ensure that it

remains strong. If there is no relationship or the relationship is weak, then the external military force will have to work with the LIFL and community to establish a strong, positive relationship.

When working to establish or build such a relationship in regions where no security forces exist, mutual respect and trust are key.[43] The first step in this process is for the local governing body to show support for the most capable LIFL candidate. This can be done in regular, open-to-the-population sessions of the local governing body. In these open sessions it is best for the governing body to make statements of support for the selected force leader and explain what the leader and the force are going to do for the community. At the same time, the local population needs to be continually informed about the security situation and the actions undertaken by the local security force. This can be done by local governing leaders when they address their followers outside the governing body forum. In doing this, the theme that must remain consistent is that results will come from community members standing up together for the collective defense of the local population and local area.[44] In turn, for their collective cooperation, measurable progress is to be noted with regard to safety, security, stability, jobs and income, education, transportation, health care and an overall better future for the community.

The second step in this process is for the LIFL and his force to show support for the local governing body and the community. This can be done by ensuring that the force comes from the local population, thus having direct ties to the community. This can also be done by ensuring that all candidates for the security force are vetted through the LIFL and local governing body. These ties should ensure that the actions of the force are in keeping with the goals and objectives of the local governing body and population.[45] The importance of these combined displays of support for the indigenous force leader and force cannot be overstated.

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[43] CJSOTF-A, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police, Bottom-up Counterinsurgency*, 8

[44] CJSOTF-A, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police, Bottom-up Counterinsurgency*, 12

[45] CJSOTF-A, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police, Bottom-up Counterinsurgency*, 24

As the LIFL and force start to operate in the local area and have success, the local population could begin to turn to the LIFL rather than the local governing body for local leadership. This can be overcome by ensuring that the LIFL and the local governing body are working in unison.[46] This can be done through regular meetings between the LIFL and a representative of the local government to discuss key issues and local policies, and, when possible, the local government and local security force leadership can be co-located in the same building or compound. While local support is being gained for the LIFL, the local governing body and LIFL need to immediately begin building on their relations with the district and central governments as well.

Maintaining unbiased and equal opportunity screening criteria is essential for villages where there may be multiple tribes or factions in residence. In cases such as this, the LIFL will have no choice but to remain open to vetting and hiring LIF candidates that belong to tribes other than his own. Being meritocratic will help alleviate claims of favoritism and possible tensions between different tribes, and demonstrate the LIFL and local governments' desire to keep the interests of the community foremost.

2. Relationship with the Local Government

When you look at the relationship between the government and the security apparatus in your local area, you can probably recall occasions when the leadership stood side by side, supporting each other. You most likely saw this during times of prosperity as well as times of need. Standing together in mutual support demonstrates for the community that the relationship between the local government and the LIFL and his force is positive and enduring no matter what the situation.

A community-based indigenous security force needs to be seen by the community as a legitimate protective entity and, because of this, needs to have a strong and positive relationship with the local government.[47] The local indigenous force will operate

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[46] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 77.

[47] Hodgson and Thomas, "*Rethinking Militias: Recognizing The Potential Role of Militia Groups in Nation-Building.*"

throughout the community in the name of the LIFL and the local government. Because of this, the community needs to understand that those in the LIF have been carefully selected.

E.   OVERCOMING   CULTURAL   DIFFERENCES   AND   LEADER SHORTFALLS

Recognizing a cultural difference is something else FMFs need to consider before partnering not only with a LIFL, but also with his forces. Just because a candidate LIFL exhibits what appear to be practices that would be unethical or illegal in the U.S. does not mean that person should not be considered. For example, in Yemen, national security forces chew khat, a narcotic. This drug is illegal in the U.S., but chewing it has been an accepted daily practice in Yemen for years. Similarly, in Afghanistan, national security forces celebrate the Muslim holiday Ramadan which lasts roughly one month. During this holiday all Muslims are required to abstain from consuming food and water during daylight hours. This has a tendency to fatigue security forces who may then appear more committed to their religion than to conducting operations against the Taliban. As long as these cultural differences can be managed and do not pose an immediate threat or ethical dilemma for the FMF, then the differences should not be considered sufficient to exclude someone from being considered as a LIFL or for the LIF.

Assessing leader characteristics and qualities, as well as motivations, can be a difficult task when time is likely limited and trust between the people conducting the assessment and the nominee has yet to be established.[48] Even once the assessment is complete there may very well be candidates who turn out to be significantly lacking when it comes to meeting the above criteria. In circumstances such as these it will be necessary to choose the nominee who has displayed both the willingness to learn the skills he will need to be an effective leader and/or has the greatest potential for being able to be leveraged by the COIN forces partnering with him.

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[48] Ali Iqbal. "Bismarck's Lesson on COIN: An Invading Force's Presence in a Foreign Land is its own Enemy," *Small Wars Journal* 7, no. 3, (2011): 5.

Insufficient time and lack of trust are just two of the many factors that could prevent an in-depth assessment of a LIFL. If a full-on assessment is not feasible, the FMF will have to fall back on assessing the LIFL based on its professional judgment. Here is where professional development training over the course of a military career should help. As it is, at the end of the day no amount of personal evaluations or character assessments of a nominee can guarantee he will be effective and remain aligned with HN and FMF interests. Evaluations are only mitigating steps designed to eliminate as much risk as possible. Arguably, eliminating these risks should be even more likely if the LIFL and his force are properly trained and employed.

III. TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE LIF: CRAWL, WALK, AND RUN

The British experiences in Malaya and Cyprus are interesting cases to review when considering how to train an indigenous force since they provide a dramatic after several years of trial and error in Malaya, the British developed a successful strategy for training indigenous forces that then evolved into the national police and armed forces. In Cyprus, the British strategy was generally ineffective, but still offers insights into the pitfalls that can occur. In both Cyprus and Malaya, hostility by major ethnic groups led to the need to stand up indigenous forces. In both cases, the degree of success in counterinsurgency was largely determined by the effectiveness of the government at the central, regional, and local levels in winning the support of the disaffected parts of the populace. The training, competence, and leadership the indigenous forces exhibited played a central role in each government's ability to win civilian support.[49]

A. ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Training has always been a key part of building any security force no matter its size or shape. Here in the United States, if you want to be part of a security force, whether it be a law enforcement organization or the Army, you will attend some form of legitimate training that is recognized by the government and the people, and that provides the population with a sense of security. In most cases, recognized training programs follow the Crawl, Walk, Run methodology. For the purposes of this thesis Crawl refers to the training of the LIF by a Foreign Military Force (FMF), Walk refers to the employment of the LIF with trainer oversight, and Run refers to unilateral operations by the LIF.

At the start of the Crawl phase is recruiting and screening. In its simplest form, recruits are assessed and screened by the force leader and local government. This ensures that both parties agree about who is going to best provide security for them and the

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[49] James S. Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies* (Carlyle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006).

population. At a minimum, the recruit will need to be physically fit, not addicted to drugs, and without a criminal record. The recruit should also be from the local area, which is essential for gaining the trust of the people.[50] At the same time, however, the FMF needs to understand that there is no such thing as a perfect recruit; the FMF must recognize that with different cultures come different ways of life and different norms.[51]

The indigenous population is the center of gravity for the FMF and, because of this, training will be different for every indigenous group.[52] In some Middle Eastern countries, training is not conducted during certain religious and other, cultural holidays. The local culture and way of life will have an effect on the training plan and schedule. Because of this, before indigenous recruits are selected, an assessment of the local area, the populace, its culture and way of life, along with security needs has to be completed. This in-depth assessment will need to be conducted by forces on the ground so that training plans can be tailored accordingly. Taking the time to identify the correct needs and conduct assessments to determine how best to meet them can make a big difference in a COIN environment. In addition to conducting an analysis of the population, the FMF will also need to assess any existing indigenous forces. This evaluation should include looking at the forces' strengths, weaknesses, logistical concerns, levels of training and experience, political or military agendas, fractionalization, external political ties, along with cultural "dos and don'ts." [53] Once the assessment is complete the FMF must employ a holistic approach so that the training enhances the legitimacy of both the security forces and the local government in the eyes of the local populace, thus gaining their support.[54]

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[50] United States Central Command (CENTCOM), *Local Defense Forces in Afghanistan: Historical Context and Best Practices (U)* (Tampa: Department of Defense, 2011), 15–16.

[51] COL Donald Bulduc, "CJSOTF-A CDR's Brief to Naval Postgraduate Students" (briefing, Naval Postgraduate School, November 2010).

[52] Roger Warner. *Shooting at the Moon: The Story of Americas Clandestine War in Laos* (South Royalton: Steerforth Press, 1996).

[53]Defense, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare*, 5–1.

[54] COL Gregory Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and The Indirect Approach," *Military Review*, (Nov–Dec 2006): 1–11.

B. LOCAL SUPPORT FOR THE TRAINING PLAN

With the assessments complete, the FMF should have a training plan in mind. This training plan should be devised to ensure that training the force will serve the needs of the population. Initially, the training plan should focus on basic policing tasks that are designed to improve the skills of the newest recruits, as well as those with prior experience and training. It is imperative that the force be seen by the populace as providing it with its protection and not as a local strong arm for the FMF. The training plan should focus on a system that provides security force members with a basic understanding of laws and regulations for the specific country, province, and local area in question. In Afghanistan for example, local police who fall under the category of a local indigenous force receive training that focuses on the national constitution and ethics, in addition to security-specific training.[55] This security-specific training could last as long as three weeks or as short as three days. The length of time available for training will need to be determined during the assessment.

Subjects to be taught could include security-tactics, law enforcement skills, first aid, weapons familiarization and marksmanship, vehicle use and vehicle searches, and, of course, human rights and proper treatment of detainees.[56] Once the FMF and the LIFL have their basic training plan, the FMF trainers will need to meet with the local governing body. The first step to ensure success for the training plan is for it to be accepted and supported by the local governing body, whether be a shura, town council, or meeting of village elders.[57] This will grant the governing body and community the opportunity to have a say in how the LIFs are trained and employed.

Once the training plan has been agreed to by the local governing body and the FMF, the population needs to also be informed. This can be done in many ways, but the important point is that the community be informed by the local governing body, since this has been designated to represent the population. Community participation will enable the

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[55] CJSOFT-A, *Village Stability Operations and Afghan Local Police, Bottom-up Counterinsurgency*, 31.

[56] CENTCOM, *Local Defense Forces in Afghanistan: Historical Context and Best Practices (U),* 16.

[57] Bulduc, "CJSOTF-A CDR's Brief to Naval Postgraduate Students."

indigenous force to be seen as integral to the community, especially once the community understands what the force intends to deter insurgent activity in the community and surrounding area over time.[58]

C.   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAINING PLAN

Once a training plan has been developed and agreed to by the FMF, the local governing body, and the LIFL, the next step is to implement the plan. The first group of indigenous forces to be trained will receive training directly from the FMF. This training should focus on the lowest level to ensure a positive outcome. Using the trained squad as a nucleus for the indigenous force, the FMF can then move to a "train the trainer" methodology.[59] This will allow the LIF to take eventual ownership of the training and provide a sense of connection between itself and the population, so that it is not seen as a puppet of the FMF. Simultaneous with the training of the lower echelons, the FMF will also provide leadership training for those individuals who have been so identified.

Again, leaders will be chosen based on their ability to operate independently in an ambiguous, dynamic, and politically sensitive environment, while representing the local government, the population, and, of course, the chain of command.[60] Leaders at all levels in any force must be able to communicate, lead, and train. In order to do these things effectively all leaders themselves need training. This training should consist of some core leader competencies, as well as instruction in how to communicate with the force, and, even more importantly, the population. It should also include sections on how to develop subordinates, and, most important, how to lead by example.[61]

Once the initial force, to include the leaders and those identified as future trainers, has been trained, the FMF trainers can begin to step aside and let the LIF lead training. The FMF will still provide mentorship and support when needed and even assist with the training when required. As members of the LIF become the primary trainers they should

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[58] Herb Daniels, "Keeping COIN Simple: the Outhouse Strategy for Security Development," *The DTIC Review*, Fall (2009): 1–10.

[59] Kilcullen, *COUNTERINSURGENCY*, 45.

[60] Army, *Army Leadership (AR 600–100)*, 1.

[61] Army, *Army Leadership (AR 600–100)*, 3.

earn credibility in the eyes of the populace, thus gaining the force greater legitimacy with the population. With the LIFL and LIF taking the lead in terms of training and development, the LIF should start to grow and provide both the local government and the population with security. Once villages sense greater control over their own security, and once they feel the future is more stable and predictable, this should in turn lead to more stable districts, more stable provinces, and, finally, a more stable country.[62]

Although basic in nature, training is only the first step in the LIF's process of becoming a legitimate and capable security force. Ideally, the training will be conducted in a non-hostile environment where trainees can focus on the task at hand and where mistakes can be easily addressed and corrected. However, if the situation on the ground does not dictate formal, classroom type training, trainees may be forced to learn to perform their jobs through trial and error at a much faster pace while patrolling the streets within their villages. To further assist the LIFL and his force following the training, the FMF needs to reinforce proper *employment* of the instruction just received. It can best do this by assisting the LIF in ambiguous situations for which the training itself may not have appropriately prepared them. To do this in the most effective manner possible, once the initial training is complete the FMF needs to remain partnered with the LIF and operate bilaterally with it to ensure training is being properly implemented and to further develop the LIF's capabilities.

Known as the "Walk" phase, this is when the LIF will have an opportunity to become more familiar and comfortable with its duties and responsibilities as a local security force and practice its new skills through real-world application. During the early stages of the Walk phase, the FMF will provide direct supervision and mentoring to the LIF. Day to day operations will be closely monitored and, when needed, led by the FMF. This level of oversight will continue until the point when the LIF has demonstrated its ability to operate more independently.

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[62] David C.Ellis & James Sisco, "Implementing COIN Doctrine in the Absence of a Legitimate State," Small Wars Journal, October (2010): 10, accessed October 18, 2010, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/implementing-coin-doctrine-in-the-absence-of-a-legitimate-state.

It is pertinent that the LIF understand the importance of continued FMF presence beyond the initial training. By remaining in the village with the LIFL and his force, the FMF members can further develop them into a professional force with intelligent and competent leaders at every level.[63] Had the security forces that U.S. forces supported against communist insurgents in El Salvador and Guatemala received attention during the employment phase of the training they received, they may not have committed the human rights violations with which they were accused.[64] A sustained FMF presence will also assist the LIF in overcoming the steep learning curve it will encounter while executing COIN. Because the initial training the LIFL receives will likely consist of little more than basic policing skills and classes on human rights, the need for the FMF to remain in direct partnership with it is crucial. The FMF will not only be in a better position to provide continued oversight for future training and employment, but will also be able to ensure the LIFL and his force are receiving adequate pay, have the logistical and operational support they need in order to remain effective, and retain essential cooperation from the local governing body.

D.   LIFL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (AOR)

Determining a LIF's AOR can be difficult, but in general this should include everyone who resides within the immediate vicinity of a village.[65] This guideline was developed in Afghanistan given who the insurgents targeted for support. A second reason for this guideline is the LIF will likely have limited mobility assets and few resources, thereby limiting its ability to project power and authority beyond its immediate area. Asking men to take on responsibilities beyond the immediate village will cause the LIF to overreach which will then make it vulnerable to insurgent attacks. This is where an outer ring of security provided around the village by conventional forces comes into play.

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[63]Corum, *Training Indigenous Forces in Counterinsurgency: A Tale of Two Insurgencies*, 35.

[64] Brig General John H. John, *Counterinsurgency Operations: Mission Impossible* (Washington, D.C: NSI J Johns, 2007), 27.

[65] CENTCOM, *Local Defense Forces in Afghanistan: Historical Context and Best Practices,* 17.

It is important to keep in mind that the LIF and the security it provides should always be part of a grander "concentric security system" that involves close coordination with other security elements. Conventional forces belonging to the HN, a supporting foreign military, or both must take on the responsibility of serving as outer security and a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) for the LIF and its villagers. The security the LIF can provide by conducting intensive patrols on the outskirts of the village should afford the LIF the opportunity to establish order and security inside the village while remaining secure itself.[66]

E. WHERE TO EMPLOY THE LIFL

Just as assessments were conducted to determine which villages to select for FMF partnership, a similar assessment needs to be undertaken to determine where to focus security efforts within the village. This is where working with and through the locals can pay big dividends because they have better knowledge of the people, terrain, where in the village the insurgents are residing and operating, what transit routes they use, and what areas are under their influence.[67] Armed with this knowledge, the LIFL and FMF will better know where to concentrate their efforts. This is not to say that other areas should be ignored or denied security. Just the opposite in order to survive, insurgents have become increasingly adaptive and all too familiar with the need to pick up and move when pressure against them is increased. Rarely do insurgents hold ground, especially when odds are against them.[68] As such, the LIF's presence needs to be sustained to a degree throughout the entire village.

F. HOW TO EMPLOY THE LIF

From a security standpoint, employing COIN tactics requires a thorough understanding of the people and the area being targeted. Employment of the LIF should be centered on "neutralizing insurgent presence in a village or area, developing and

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[66] CENTCOM, *Local Defense Forces in Afghanistan: Historical Context and Best Practices,* 17.

[67] Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam,* 15.

[68] Phillip Davidson, *Vietnam at War, the history, 1946–1975* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 405.

maintaining a secure environment, and securing the willing support and participation of the local population."[69] In order to achieve these ends, the LIF and FMF must display an unwavering commitment to their cause, and more so than the insurgents. The overall purpose of the LIF in COIN is to serve as a defensive force that protects village inhabitants from insurgent control and influence. Operations that can assist the LIF attain this include establishing random checkpoints, conducting security patrols during both day and night, emplacing ambushes along suspected insurgent lines of operation (LOO), collecting intelligence, and engaging in other measures that actively seek to disrupt insurgent activity. During the conduct of these operations, the LIF and its partnered FMF must make it well known that the village is being protected 24/7.[70]

Although the LIF is designed to operate in primarily a defensive role, there will still be times when it will need to take offensive measures to target insurgent infrastructure.[71] Depending on the strength of the insurgency, these offensive operations can range in scope from cordon and search of suspected enemy compounds to more elaborate operations that seek to root out significant insurgent forces. These types of operations need to be taken into consideration when developing the training plan for the LIF. If a LIFL and the FMF determine the threat is more than they can handle, existing HN security forces or larger conventional forces can be called in since presumably they are better trained to perform high threat missions that require considerable manpower and resources.[72]

G.   EXPANDING THE "INK BLOT"

As the LIF and the local government become more integrated and prove capable of employing a holistic approach, to include civic programs designed to improve human

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[69] CENTCOM, *Local Defense Forces in Afghanistan: Historical Context and Best Practices,* 4.

[70] Unknown, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, 10–11.

[71] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 29.

[72] Robert M. Cassidy, "The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency," *Parameters: The U.S.. Army's Professional Journal*, Summer (2006): 61.

capital, the community should become more closely knit and supportive of both.[73] As security in the village increases locals will have more incentives to provide the LIF with actionable intelligence about insurgent activities.[74] The availability of basic services and a better standard of living should help to ensure a long term stable environment free of insurgents and their coercive measures. Once the LIF has progressed to the "Run" phase, where it is capable of operating unilaterally, the FMF can then expand its efforts to neighboring villages so as to increase the seamlessness of government-controlled territory, sometimes referred to as the "ink blot."[75] The FMF that once served as advisors in a subordinate role are then free to partner with another village or withdraw from the country altogether.[76]

H. THE END GAME

Developing or improving the quantity and capabilities of indigenous forces, ensuring that there is an integrated and unified approach between the LIFL, local government, and the FMF, and increasing the security of the population, are all key to waging a successful COIN campaign. As previously stated, the first step of this process is selecting of the proper FMF, making sure it has suitable personnel to be COIN advisors in a foreign country, and that they are properly trained and equipped.[77] The next step is to find, access, and develop the LIFL. Once this is done, the FMF with the support of the LIFL and local governing body can take the steps identified in this chapter to train the LIF. The support of the local government and population is crucial. This is why proper training and employment of LIFL and LIF is so important; they have to be able to work within the community and meet the community's needs.

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[73] Wilson, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and The Indirect Approach," 11.

[74] Daniels, "Keeping COIN Simple: the Outhouse Strategy for Security Development," 10.

[75] MAJ James C. Keller, "'Fixing the Whole-of-Government Approach in Failed States – A Model for Security Force Assistance" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2010), 38.

[76] Ian Gardiner, *In The Service of The Sultan: a personal account of the Dhofar insurgency* (England: Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2006), 178.

[77] Currey, *Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 83.

Only by taking this "train the trainer" approach and through a "crawl-walk-run" methodology can the LIF be incorporated as a dependable fully functioning force. With proper training and coaching, the LIF should be able to eventually conduct operations unilaterally and thereby provide security and maintain order, destroying or negating insurgent networks, protecting friendly infrastructure, and allowing for continued development and improvement of its own community.

IV. REAL-WORLD APPLICATION

In an effort to demonstrate the utility of finding the right LIFL, and properly training and employing him and his force to be able to execute COIN, this chapter will describe how the prescriptions outlined in this thesis are flexible enough to be employed in two distinctly different scenarios. By using these scenarios, we will demonstrate the utility of this thesis, which describes how U.S. SOF can better choose, influence, and leverage indigenous force leaders and their force in order to both counter existing insurgencies in under-governed territories, and further U.S. and HN security interests. If scenario-based planning is done well and its insights are acted upon promptly, the U.S. military may be better poised to help deter prospective threats, or dissuade enemies from creating threating new capabilities in the first place.[78] In both scenarios we will be using the Village Stability Operations (VSO) concept as the platform for finding, training and employing local indigenous forces.

A. ASSUMPTIONS

In order to focus more attention on the indigenous leader and his force, we have made a number of assumptions regarding coordination and interaction among the U.S. Department of Defense, other U.S. agencies, and the HN government. Our first assumption is that the U.S. government has a clear National Security Strategy with a goal that supports counterinsurgency operations in countries "X" and "Y." The second assumption is that funding has already been approved under Title 10 (funding provided to the U.S. Army), Title 20 (funds provided for national defense), and 1206 (funds that are allowed to be used in long term engagements with indigenous forces). The third assumption is that the tactical and operational units selected to conduct these counterinsurgency operations are already properly manned, equipped, and trained. Our final assumption is that the HN government has agreed to this engagement.

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[78]Andrew F. Krepinevich, *7 Deadly Scenarios* (New York: Bantam Books, 2009), 15.

B.   **COUNTRY X**

Country X gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in the early 1900s. Between 1918 and 1962 Country X was a monarchy ruled by a very prominent family from within the region, but still influenced by the British. In 1962, the northern part of Country X then became a republic, but Britain retained a protectorate over the area around Country X's southernmost port. Britain withdrew in 1967 and the area became Southern Country X and, in 1970, Southern Country X adopted a Communist-style government. In 1990, it formally united with the North to become the Republic of Country X. Since then, Country X has been ruled by a president who came to power through a military coup and has since installed many cronies and family members, to include family members overseeing internal security. Over the course of the past decade, the government has been fighting an armed insurgency in the northern part of the country, while at the same time fighting a regional opposition movement in the south. The insurgency in the northern part of the country is calling for a more tribal government, with the tribes to have a larger say in governance. In the southern part of the country the opposition movement is calling for more democratic changes and more government aid. At the same time, the south is also calling for a larger redistribution of government profits from oil and natural gas revenues.

Currently, Country X consolidates most of its security forces in the urban areas and areas around the capital region, leaving most of the other regions and rural areas without any meaningful security presence. Country X's national infrastructure is failing and is in disrepair because the country does not invest in education and is also unable to contract outside companies to come improve its infrastructure because the companies would have to pay hefty "special taxes" in order to operate inside Country X. Country X's water system, for instance, is increasingly over-burdened and neglected, and 35% of its population does not have easy access to clean drinking water. Additionally, Country X's oil reserves are being depleted and it is expected that Country X's oil fields will be finished by the end of the next decade.

1. Al Qaeda's Involvement in Country X

Over the past decade al Qaeda has been able to establish a large terror network with deep roots that run across Country X; al Qaeda has done so by applying lessons learned from mistakes made in other safe haven states. It is believed that al Qaeda has worked very hard to curry favor with local tribes inside County X. al Qaeda leaders inside Country X have been able to form their messages to fit Country X's local grievances, including the lack of economic benefits from Country X's oil and gas revenues. In reaction to al Qaeda messages about inequalities, many tribal leaders in remote regions and rural areas have allowed their sons to join al Qaeda and provide the terrorist organization protection from government forces. At the same time, some tribal leaders view attacks on al Qaeda in their lands as attacks on the tribes themselves. In order to ensure that al Qaeda maintains its positive relations with Country X's citizens and these tribes, it has limited its attacks inside Country X to western targets and Country X security officials. In order to maintain its status inside Country X, AQ also provides many of the services that Country X has not been able to provide to its citizens in remote regions and rural areas, by doing things like digging wells, offering medical treatment, and even providing monthly allowances to many of the people within communities that al Qaeda interacts with on a regular basis. This has allowed Country X to become one of the biggest hubs, training centers, and staging grounds for al Qaeda Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)'s operations, to include several attacks against U.S. interests.

2. U.S. Involvement in Country X

Prior to September 11, 2001, U.S. involvement in Country X was focused on helping to develop Country X's naval and coast guard forces, along with other security forces and the national police. After the attack on September 11, U.S. policy in Country X turned to fighting al-Qaeda. In 2009, Country X received $180 million in aid from USAID and another $80 million in military aid, and the U.S. conducted targeted strikes against key al-Qaeda leaders in Country X. In 2010, it is believed that Country X received nearly $375 million in U.S. aid. At the same time, U.S. officials were largely restricted to the capital region due to rules emplaced by Country X which invoked

security concerns. This prevented U.S. officials from being able to oversee how their funds were being used outside the capital region. As of late, the U.S. has returned to a focused development of Country X's naval and coast guard forces, and of security forces within the urban areas and capital region.

3.   A Solution in the Making

Fast forward to 2015, after more than 15 years of financial and limited military assistance, the U.S. (finally) adopts a COIN approach that would establish local indigenous security forces in remote regions and rural areas of Country X. The aim of this approach is to allow Country X to provide a secure and safe environment for its citizens and reduce possible flashpoints for Country X's central government. At the same time, it answers the call by other countries to remove al Qaeda threats from within County X's borders. This COIN approach is based on the VSO concept that met with some success in Afghanistan.

VSO employs a bottom-up methodology that strengthens and stimulates village social structures to provide security, enable development, and nurture local governance.[79] By conducting these kinds of operations, Country X will be better able to establish local security forces in more remote regions and rural areas. Additionally, Country X's actions will greatly decrease al Qaeda's ability to operate in the open and force it to reduce its activities inside Country X, ideally leaving it altogether. To accept this plan, Country X will have to significantly increase the number of security forces dedicated to securing all of its terrain and not just urban areas. The overall aim is to establish a secure environment throughout Country X, which will in turn allow villages to establish effective governance and begin to address villagers' needs on behalf of the provincial and central governments.

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[79] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 25–32.

4.   Executing the Plan

Prior to deploying a U.S. SOF element to Country X, a small team representing the command and control (C2) cell will deploy to Country X. En route to Country X this element will visit with key agencies in Washington DC and gather information critical to helping identify the right LIFL, while at the same time ensuring that each agency understands what the U.S. SOF unit has been tasked to do. Once in Country X, this element will meet with key individuals within the U.S. embassy to include the ambassador, CIA station chief, the Military Assistance officer, and the Defense Attaché. In these meetings all parties will be briefed on what the U.S. SOF team will be doing in Country X and, of course, gather information that will include possible VSO sites and LIFL candidates. Once all meetings at the embassy are complete the U.S. SOF team will meet with key individuals within Country X's security forces, to include the intelligence arm, to determine where the first VSO site should be located and to identify possible LIFL candidates. During these meetings the U.S. SOF team will ensure that key players in Country X understand how important it is to choose the right site and LIFL, and how a successful VSO will improve Country X over time.

Once initial planning and final coordination is complete, the initial team will deploy, made up of three elements: a C2 team, an operational team, and a team to serve as quick reaction force (QRF) while it starts to develop its plan for setting up a second VSO site. Once in Country X and after the U.S. SOF team has established its C2 cell in the U.S. embassy and the QRF team is functional, the operational team will have a small two man team from County X's special operations forces attached to it. The purpose of this two man team is to guarantee the central government some oversight as well as to ensure that HN SOF (or their equivalent) can observe the development of the LIFL and the VSO program. When the augmented U.S. team leaves the capital region, it will once again meet with local leaders

In these meetings, the U.S. SOF team will work with the area elders and power brokers to help them understand what a successful VSO site with the correct LIFL would do for their area. A successful VSO site would allow for infrastructure development to

improve, to include the building of schools, clinics and other key infrastructure nodes. Additionally a secure area will allow NGOs to move into the area and provide aid as well as agricultural assistance in an effort to help Country X overcome its poor farming techniques that have led to a fresh water shortage across the county. The operational team will help them understand that with security comes development, aid, and a voice at the governing table. Once all the meetings and a final assessment of the area have been conducted, the operational team will return to the capital region and work with the C2 node and other key individuals inside the embassy and Country X government to select a final location and a LIFL. Once these decisions have been made the operational unit and members of Country X's government will once again move into the selected area and meet with the local leaders and powerbrokers.

This is the key point in the operation because all parties involved have to agree on the location of the first VSO site and the first LIFL. In the past the president of Country X has been hesitant to develop security forces outside urban areas, thus the establishment of this site will set the tone for future sites in Country X and become the power center for its region. Success in this first location is the doorway to success in other areas of Country X. Once all parties have agreed on this location and the LIFL, the operational team along with key local leaders will approach the LIFL and suggest to him that he and his force serve as the local security force in the selected area. The local leaders and the U.S. operational unit will also explain his duties and responsibilities to the LIFL and ensure that everyone at the table understands what is expected and how the VSO program works. Once again, the U.S. SOF team will ensure that everyone understands the benefits of establishing the VSO site. The operational team will also work with the LIFL and local leaders to determine the size of the LIF element, based on the geography and demographics of the villages in the area. The LIFL and the operational team will work together to determine who the LIFL should initially try to recruit. If the LIFL already has a force, the SOF team will need to work with him to determine which members of the LIFL's force will need to be dropped or whether members need to be added. If the LIFL's force is to be reduced, he and the SOF team need to make sure they won't create new insurgent forces from those they let go. At this time, the guidelines would be set for

assessment and selection. To be in the LIF each candidate has to first reside in the selected area or village, be confirmed by the LIFL and other senior members of the village, and, finally, be screened using biometric devices to check for any past history of criminal activity. Once the LIF candidates have been identified they will next participate in a selection and assessment process to ensure that the right candidates are chosen.

Prior to the beginning of training, the operational team will work alongside the local governing body to establish the VSO site and get mission essential supplies and equipment delivered to it. On the agreed date all parties will meet at the established VSO site/training area. This area needs to be large enough to house the LIF, the operational team, and any attachments from the host government that may want to oversee the training and employment of the LIF. Once on site, the U.S. SOF team will explain to the LIF what is going to take place over the next three weeks.

Once the briefings are complete the operational team along with the LIF will follow the priority of instruction (POI) regarding in-processing and the issuing of mission essential supplies and equipment. The importance of having the proper equipment and training cannot be overstated when it comes to winning tactical engagements with well-armed insurgents.[80]

The first part of the POI will be classroom-based, with some field training on a prescribed training site. Once the LIF and the LIFL reach a point where the LIF can operate at a functional level, the training will move to an "on the job" phase when the operational team will work alongside it. This will continue until the LIF and the LIFL have demonstrated that they are capable of operating on their own in their AOR. As this is happening, the LIFL will interact with the populace and the local government from the lowest levels up to the district level in order to earn the respect of the people that the LIFL has been charged to protect. Only by gaining and maintaining respect and authority from the population and the local government will the LIF and LIFL be able to guarantee the security that will in turn enable local development.[81] In doing this the LIF, the host

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[80] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 29.

[81] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 27.

nation along with the FMF will be able to push out any formal or in formal organizations who have been taking advantage of the security situation to conduct attacks against the host nation or other countries. The final step in the training POI is to receive certification from the local governing body, along with certification from the district and provincial governments. In granting this, these governing bodies will reinforce for the population that they believe in and stand behind the LIF and LIFL.

5. HN Takes the Lead – Insurgency Declines

Now that the HN government has officially certified the LIF force, it can start to conduct operations on its own, while the U.S. SOF teams serve as its QRF. Over time, the U.S. SOF team will slowly withdraw from the area, but come back and meet with the LIF and community leaders from time to time. At this point, the LIF is operating on its own free of oversight from the U.S. SOF team. The host nation is working with the local government and the LIF to improve relations and infrastructure in the local area. Additionally through the use of NGOs and education the local area are able to address the fresh water shortage issue along with crop rotation plans that impacts the water table to include the reduction of the number that do not produce crops that can feed and sustain the people of Country X.

With the first VSO site established, the operational team that established the LIF becomes the U.S. SOF QRF force and the former QRF team conducts operations to establish the 2nd VSO site and LIF. Thanks to the establishment of the first LIF, insurgent activity in the region should already be severely hindered and any popular support the insurgency once had in the community should be dissipating. This will force any insurgents to migrate to regions that have not yet been secured by LIFs, which will make them easier targets for HN conventional forces to locate and destroy. The HN, along with NGOs and United States Agency International Development (USAID), will also now be able to move into the secure area and start to work with the local government and populace to improve infrastructure, build schools, and improve the general living conditions and quality of life of the population.

C. RISE OF AND CURRENT STATE OF THE INSURGENCY IN COUNTRY Y

Marxist-Leninist insurgents have been active in Country Y since 1964. Since the birth of their insurgency up through the early 2000s, they have been able to increase their active and passive membership thanks to an ideology centered on more equal distribution of wealth, otherwise manipulated by the elite via government welfare programs that primarily reward those who live in urban areas and major cities. The insurgents today are largely able to sustain their operations through their involvement in the drug trade. In exchange for their "protection," insurgents tax the cocaine and marijuana that are produced in the rural areas by peasant farmers who work for the drug cartels. The insurgents are feared in Country Y as well because of their kidnappings of wealthy citizens and government officials. This provides another source of funding and a further means to leverage the government to meet their political demands.

Support for the insurgents began to gradually decline in the early 2000s after the newly elected president began receiving significant foreign assistance from the U.S. and other allied countries. As per the terms of these bilateral agreements, the president used aid to expand the size and capabilities of the country's security forces in order to defeat the drug cartels and insurgents, as well as to regain control over the countryside. Foreign assistance money also went to humanitarian and social development projects in some of the rural areas that had once been controlled by the insurgents. As a result of the government's expansion into the rural areas, its revised economic policies, and its democratic security strategy, popular support for the government has increased over the past ten years, while support for the insurgent ideology has waned. Yet despite the growing economy and an attempt to expand government services and programs to members of the lower classes living in rural areas, the insurgents maintain their position about the need for further economic reform.

1. Current Situation

Today the insurgent strength in Country Y is roughly 9,000 armed members with another 9,000 active members who collect intelligence and provide logistical support.

The insurgents maintain their cells in the densely vegetated rural areas where security forces have a difficult time detecting them. They are well armed with a variety of machineguns and automatic weapons, and indirect fire assets to include mortars of various sizes. In an effort to rebuild their support base and regain leverage in the political arena, the insurgents are becoming bolder with their attacks, mainly aimed at government security forces. The insurgents continue to use the support and sanctuary of the densely vegetated rural areas of the country to launch from, but are increasingly choosing targets in urban areas to project the image that they are bigger than they really are.[82] The attacks they conduct are primarily guerrilla-type hit and run attacks or bombings aimed at highlighting government weakness.

This rural-based insurgency has proven difficult for the government to root out. For one, there simply are not enough military and police to deploy to the numerous isolated regions the insurgents occupy. Secondly, targeting the cells and leadership of the insurgency through kinetic means only temporarily affects them until replacements can be named. As long as government presence and control remains minimal in the remote areas the insurgents use for sanctuary, insurgent influence will prove more relevant to the population residing there. Drug production and the protection the insurgents provide the farmers offers the peasants a better way of life than the government can currently provide. Until the situation for the peasants changes, the government will continue to be involved in a persistent and protracted fight against the insurgents.

2. A Solution in the Making

Fast forward to 2017 and after more than 18 years of financial and limited military assistance, the U.S. proposes the use of a COIN approach that recently proved successful in Afghanistan against the Taliban insurgents. The U.S. wants to help Country Y defeat the insurgents through other than just military means. Establishing local governance in the rural isolated areas in conjunction with developing local security forces to help drive out the insurgents will deny the insurgents access to their most important

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[82] Gordon McCormick, "Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare" (class notes, Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, Sept 2010).

asset, the population. Again, the VSO concept is being adapted. While the concept itself is well known by this point, there is more to it than is generally recognized. In fact, U.S. SOF had a learning curve that they themselves had to overcome before they could begin to reap the fruits of their labor.

The first challenge U.S. SOF became aware of when executing VSO was how to select the best qualified LIFL. When the concept was first introduced in Afghanistan in 2009 not a lot of emphasis was placed on whom exactly to select to serve as the LIFL. Some LIFLs were selected because they were nominated by members of the Afghan government who were from the affected region. Others were selected because of the amount of power and influence they already had established in the area. As the U.S. soon realized, selecting a LIFL for these reasons alone was not always sufficient to ensure he was the most suitable person for the job. A second challenge U.S. SOF faced was that the LIFs were not trained to an acceptable standard prior to their being placed into action unilaterally as local police. A third challenge that had to be overcome was that even if U.S. SOF did have sufficient time to complete the training POI created for the Afghan Local Police (ALP), their success was not guaranteed. A lack of sustained direct oversight by the partnered U.S. SOF teams until the ALP was capable of performing their role unilaterally led to problems in the field. For instance, one team caught an Afghan National Army commander using his authority to exploit villagers in Khakrez when his coalition partners were not around.[83]

The urgent desire to expand the VSO concept in critical regions of Afghanistan as quickly as possible to meet presidential timelines for the pullout of U.S. forces presumably explains why these three critical steps for conducting successful VSO were overlooked. However, once the need to place greater emphasis on these three steps was recognized, U.S. SOF began to experience greater success in the overall acceptance of the ALP by villagers, as well as their improved performance as local defense forces in remote areas of the country.

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[83] LTC Basil Catanzaro and MAJ Kirk Windmueller, "Taking a Stand: Village Stability Operations and the Afghan Local Police," *Special Warfare Magazine*, July–September (2011): 22.

In addition to U.S. SOF taking this village-centric approach in Afghanistan, Afghan SOF was also trained to conduct this mission unilaterally. This greatly increased the number of forces dedicated to the effort and, after eight years, the program proved sufficiently successful that villages proved able to establish local governance that could then begin addressing their broader needs. These efforts greatly decreased the strength of the Taliban and caused them to either give up their struggle or retreat to areas that were too remote and too small to pose a significant threat.

Hoping to capitalize on its VSO experiences in Afghanistan, the U.S. offers Country Y military assistance to conduct similar village-centric COIN operations using a small contingent of SOF. Country Y approves the U.S.'s offer for assistance, but only under the condition that U.S. SOF leads the efforts until its own SOF units are trained adequately to take the lead themselves.[84] U.S. SOF receives mission approval and begins movement to Country Y. Excellent relations with Country Y's government and security forces developed over the past several decades help facilitate all planning with HN counterparts.

3. Executing the Plan

Once in-country one of the first orders of business for the U.S. SOF teams is to determine locations of strategic importance where the insurgents are located.[85] They do this by consulting with intelligence personnel belonging to both Country Y and the U.S. (the U.S. has had a sizable intelligence office in the embassy for many years). Because, in this scenario, U.S. SOF will be partnered with HN SOF throughout the entire COIN mission, the HN SOF also conducts parallel planning to identify insurgent sanctuaries in strategic locations.

U.S. and HN SOF next seek out villages that have openly displayed opposition towards the insurgents in the past. Matching these locations with strategic locations

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[84] Petit, "The Fight For The Village," 31.

[85] COL Ty Connett & COL Bob Cassidy, "Village Stability Operations: More than Village Defense." *Special Warfare Magazine*, Jul–Sept (2011), accessed 30 July 2011, http://www.soc.mil/swcs/swmag/archive/SW2403/SW2403VillageStabilityOperations_MoreThanVillageD efense.html.

where the insurgents are still present drastically narrows the number of potential villages suitable for initial COIN support. This is because most of the peasants who provide sanctuary for the insurgents are content with the situation they have created for themselves and their families, making it difficult to find whole villages that would oppose the insurgents in return for U.S. and HN support. Nevertheless, five locations are identified and the SOF teams get busy coordinating to try and identify candidates to serve as the LIFLs. U.S. SOF consults with personnel and government agencies working in the U.S. embassy to see if they have any candidates to nominate. Meanwhile, HN SOF check with their sources to try and identify LIFLs in the designated regions based on the Internal and External Characteristics they have been given.

With a list of potential LIFL candidates in hand, U.S. and HN SOF infiltrate their respective regions in conjunction with larger conventional forces who will help set the necessary conditions for the SOF teams to conduct COIN, as well as to provide much needed security and serve as a QRF until a LIF can be established. One point that was made clear to the HN SOF teams early on in the planning for this mission was the importance of finding the right LIFL. As such, the SOF teams were to take as much time as needed to thoroughly vet the LIFL candidates before choosing one. The circumstances for doing this turn out to be different for each of the five teams, with the fastest vetting of a LIFL taking only six days. This particular LIFL was an individual who was well known and was recommended by a CIA member working out of the embassy. The longest it took a team to select a suitable LIFL was twenty seven days. This was because none of the preliminary candidates turned out to be acceptable once the team was embedded in the village and did further vetting. The team, therefore, had to conduct a series of meetings with the locals to try and come to a consensus on who should be selected. Things became even more complicated at this location when the nominee who received the most support from the villagers did not want the job for fear that his family would be harmed by the insurgents. Negotiations ensued and the nominee finally agreed to accept the task.

Upon confirming that HN and U.S. assistance would be accepted, the teams rewarded the villages by allowing each to nominate a project of its choice that would

benefit the community as a whole. This idea was very popular, especially once villagers realized the materials for the projects would be purchased from within their villages and stimulate the local economy.[86] Additionally, as per the agreement with the Minister of Interior of Country Y, weapons and equipment were delivered so that LIFLs could begin the hiring and vetting of the indigenous force each would help train and command. Based on the geography and demographics of the villages, a number was designated for how many LIF personnel each location could hire. Offering salaries only slightly smaller than those of the national police, teams had no problem meeting their LIF manning requirements. To be selected to serve as a LIF, each candidate had to reside in the village, be confirmed by the LIFL and other senior members of the village, then be screened using biometric devices which cross-referenced national databases to check for any past history of criminal activity. Once a candidate passed these three hurdles he was added to the ranks and immediately began training. For this particular scenario each village trained its LIF using an intense pre-determined three week POI tailored specifically for County Y. Security to allow SOF and the LIF to complete the POIs was provided by the conventional forces who vigorously patrolled the peripheries and, in some cases, fought off curious insurgents attempting to regain lost territory.

While the LIFL and his force received their three weeks of training, representatives from the district government were doing their part to establish a local government at each location; at a minimum they identified someone who would represent the village and coordinate with the district leadership. This village representative was confirmed by a vote by a majority of the villagers and introduced to the duties of his new position. With a decisive link now established between the local and the district governments, and a local security force to help keep out the insurgents, the village had the makings of a framework to overcome barriers built between the two by insurgents over the years.[87] With the assistance of their district government and funds allocated to the COIN program, the villages were granted limited materials and agricultural supplies so they could farm cash crops other than coca and marijuana. When the villagers realized

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[86] Petit, "Fight For the Village," 29.

[87] Petit, "Fight For The Village," 27.

that there was money to be made by growing produce that could be taken to market openly and, in some cases, exported they accepted the idea.

The three-week-long POI each LIFL and LIF received from the U.S. and HN SOF teams appeared to be sufficient to put the LIFs to work. Critical to this step was for the SOF teams to remain partnered with the LIFs to ensure they correctly employed the training they received and to answer questions regarding any ambiguous situations they encountered. In some cases, the SOF teams had to take the lead during the execution of some of the LIF's daily duties. This would continue until the LIFs displayed enough competence to perform the duties unilaterally and without assistance from the SOF teams. For each of the sites that received assistance a direct correlation could be drawn between the capabilities of the LIFLs and their forces and the credibility each LIF gained in villagers' eyes thanks to the security they provided.[88]

It was during the three-week POI for the LIFL that one of the teams encountered an issue that almost threatened progress of the program in that particular village. Coca production had historically been a large source of revenue for the village and the LIFL was reluctant to cease these activities. Despite intense efforts from the partnered SOF team, the LIFL was not willing to conform. It was not until local powerbrokers became involved in the negotiations that the LIFL was made to accept the notion that the cultivation of coca was only a short-term fix to a long-term problem for the community. An agreement between the SOF unit and the LIFL was reached, and training of the LIFL was able to continue.

As the capabilities of each LIF continued to improve and local governments took more and more initiative, the SOF teams began to depart and let the LIFL take full responsibility for security. HN conventional forces providing outer security for the supported sites were able to scale back their original manning numbers as well, but didn't pull out completely until villagers from each of the supported sites proved able to

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[88] CW3 Stephen N. Rust, "The Nuts and Bolts of Village Stability Operations," *Special Warfare Magazine*, Jul–Sept (2011): 28.

successfully band together against the insurgents on successive occasions. Insurgent support dropped off dramatically in each of the villages, forcing the insurgents to find support and sanctuary elsewhere.

4. HN Takes the Lead – Insurgency Declines

Having been successfully involved in the implementation of the COIN strategy against the insurgents, members of the original five HN SOF teams that were partnered with U.S. SOF put together a cadre so that they could begin training their own SOF teams to eventually conduct the new strategy without U.S. assistance. Thus, while the next five U.S. and HN SOF teams identified and embedded with subsequent villages, the HN cadre were busy training their own SOF. By the time the second iteration of U.S. and HN SOF teams was finished with its villages, HN SOF were ready to take over the COIN program on their own.

Effects of the COIN strategy became apparent to the government of Country Y shortly after the first iteration of supported sites was established. Insurgent activity in those areas was severely hampered as the popular support they once could count on from the lower-class peasants began to falter. Many insurgents recognized that their once popular ideology and their opposition to the government were no longer accepted and, as a result, their support base nearly ceased to exist. This forced the remaining insurgents to migrate to regions that had not yet been pacified but were not strategically important. It took several years before the insurgent organization in Country Y was degraded into little more than a band of hardcore followers.[89] These hardcore followers were forced into hiding in some of the most uninhabitable terrain in of the country where they were safe from security forces, but had little means of presenting a significant threat to the central government.

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[89] Frank Giordano and Gordon H. McCormick, "Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerrilla Mobilisation," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 296. In this article, McCormick and Giordano point out that not all remaining insurgents, to include the hardcore extremists, have to be eliminated for an insurgency to collapse. However, others might argue that hardcore extremists are sometimes the insurgents that should be feared the most because of their radical beliefs and behaviors, and should therefore be eradicated at almost all costs.

D. ANALYSIS

In both scenarios the reader can see how, by using the ideas established in this thesis, it should be possible to establish a successful LIFL and LIF. The prescriptions outlined have enough flexibility built into them that with slight modification, they can be applied to most COIN campaigns. In each of the two scenarios, the country had a different relationship with the U.S. Country Y had a long standing relationship with the U.S., and allowed in a large U.S. military force, and did not mind for others in the region to know that it was accepting U.S. assistance. In contrast, Country X did not have the same history with the U.S. and sought to keep the number of U.S. forces on the ground very small and very much out of view of others in the region for fear of being seen as a U.S. puppet.

In each scenario, U.S. SOF with active HN participation were able to find the right LIFL, and to properly train that LIFL and his force to be able to assist in providing security for the local area. Once security was established, support and aid from NGOs as well as the HN and the U.S. was able to reach these areas. At the same time, insurgent support dropped off dramatically, forcing the insurgents to find support and sanctuary elsewhere.

While contemplating these scenarios one thing that the reader has to bear in mind is that human relations are very challenging and they need to be nurtured and developed over time before any action can be taken. Additionally, when it comes to LIFLs even the best choices can produce negative outcomes and alter existing balances of power in unforeseen ways. In order to avoid this, the planners, coordinators, and operators on the ground need to be able to mitigate such risks by consistently reinforcing relationships with the LIF, the community, and the government. [90]

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[90] Petit, "The Fight for the Village," 25–32.

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V. CONCLUSION

Recent experience has shown that it can take several years, sometimes spanning more than a decade for an insurgency to be pushed back below its point of critical mass to a point where it is no longer a significant threat to the government.[91] This point is typically reached only with the dedicated assistance of FMFs.[92] However, COIN conflicts require a commitment of time and resources that few countries today are willing to stomach or afford. Despite the many lessons learned, and the myriad of different theories and strategies that exist, history indicates that COIN conflicts are some of the most difficult and expensive for an FMF to execute. Fighting an enemy that is elusive and does not abide by any agreed upon laws of warfare can only be accomplished with the support of the indigenous population.

One of Mao Tse-tung's most famous aphorisms is that "the people are like water and the army is like fish."[93] What Mao implied is that the insurgents need the population or they will cease to exist. What Mao implied is that by separating the insurgents from the population the insurgents will cease to exist. Training local indigenous forces in rural areas of a country where insurgents often reside is one strategy that FMFs have used with success. But a COIN strategy is only as good as those chosen to implement it, particularly when talking about the HN. LIFLs, as well as those who will serve as the local indigenous forces, must be carefully selected to isolate insurgents from the population. The LIF will need to establish local security, gain the support and participation of the local populace, and facilitate local development initiatives in order to create local governance in under-governed areas of the country. The LIFL and his force will require practical training that is unique to the local social environment in order to attain a level of proficiency appropriate for carrying out their tasks effectively. But the

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[91] Giordano and McCormick, "Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerrilla Mobilisation," 306.

[92] LTC Glen Robinson, "Libya's Freedom Born of Well-Run Campaign," *Monterey (CA) Herald*, August 25, 2011, accessed September 22, 2011, http://www.montereyherald.com/ci_18753986?IADID=Search-www.montereyherald.com-www.montereyherald.com Last accessed: 22 Sept 2011

[93] Mao Tse-Tung, *Aspects of China's Anti-Japanese Struggle* (Bombay: Open library, 1948), 48.

partnership between the FMF and LIF does not end there. The FMF must remain partnered with the LIF following the training until the LIFL and his force are capable of performing their roles in a COIN environment unilaterally.

Efforts by the FMF to expand this strategy in a supported country must be exercised with caution. The importance of finding the right LIFL, creating a responsible LIF via training, and continuing to mentor both cannot be overstated. A lack of appreciation for the importance of any of these factors may not seem immediately significant, but over time will lead to the likelihood of instability not only for the local government, but potentially for the provincial and central governments too, especially if those governments are weak. A LIFL who volunteers for the job for reasons of personal or familial gain will at some point create dissension in his community. If the LIFL does not possess or have the potential to adopt the leader characteristics identified in this thesis he will have difficulty building cohesion between his force, members of the community, and the local government. Likewise, if the LIFL is not susceptible to being leveraged by his partnered FMF even when the national-level goals and interests are not aligned, than the LIFL may hinder efforts to set the conditions needed to drive out the insurgents and establish local governance. This is why it is imperative that the guidelines established in this thesis be referenced prior to and throughout partnering with indigenous forces.

A.   REALITY OF THE SITUATION

An FMF cannot always expect to have control over who will be selected as the LIFL, and when this happens the FMF needs to be able to plan accordingly. National pride, pursuit of political agendas, or simply fear of authorizing the creation of a force that may one day threaten the government are all viable reasons for a HN to limit the authority a FMF has in selecting LIFLs. In circumstances such as these, commanders of the FMF have to make the decision to either work with the LIFLs given to them, try and negotiate terms where the LIFLs are selected based on mutual agreement, or reject the partnership.[94] In situations where the FMF has limited control over the selection of

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[94] LTG John F. Mulholland, "Northern Alliance as the CJSOTF-A Commander during the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001," discussion with students at the Naval Postgraduate School, August 16, 2011).

LIFLs it becomes paramount that it references the characteristics listed in this thesis and chooses the LIFL that best matches the outlined criteria.

Another area this thesis touches on, but has left for future exploration, is what should happen when the HN government replaces a LIFL with someone who does not have the same goals and interests as the FMF. Again, the FMF will have to determine whether there are other alternatives to accepting that individual. This suggests that it would be worthwhile to study how to best leverage imposed LIFLs. Involvement in illicit or illegal activities, and disputes with neighboring tribes or different ethnicities, are just a few possible sources of misaligned interests, but ones that must be overcome by the FMF and the LIFL if the LIFL is to create a stable community that insurgents cannot exploit. As noted in Chapter II, there will be times when it is acceptable for interests to not be aligned and the FMF will have to overlook these divergences. On the other hand, there will also be times when it is critical that the LIFL and FMF agree on a common goal. Studying how to leverage corrupt or non-compliant, even obstructionist LIFLs in situations such as these could prove extremely useful.

No matter how important the concept of working by, with, and through local indigenous forces is for successfully conducting COIN, this concept alone is only one element in the combined overall strategy. The bottom-up approach that requires training local indigenous forces and creating local governance must be complemented by a top-down approach from the central government. Common ground has to be found between the two. Effective two-way communication between local and higher governments is essential to understand the conditions that allowed the insurgency to develop in the first place, as well as to address the needs and expectations of the local communities in order to break their ties with the insurgents.[95]

Attacking insurgent networks is another important component of an effective COIN strategy. Steadily eliminating the leadership of insurgent organizations at the same time that their support base is being reduced can cause panic within the organization and thereby help set conditions for the insurgency to implode. A final component of a sound

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[95] MG Michael T. Flynn, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan," Washington DC: Center for a New American Security, 2010.

COIN strategy is the implementation of a reconciliation program that offers insurgents a way of life that is more appealing to them than anything the insurgency promises. The opportunities created as a result of visible social and economic improvement in selected villages can help create these favorable conditions for insurgents wishing to reconcile.

B.   RECOMMENDATIONS

SOF units tasked to partner with and train local indigenous forces in a COIN conflict should find the ideas presented in this thesis useful when they have influence over who is to be chosen as the LIFL, how the local indigenous force will be trained, and how long the partnership following the LIF's formal training might last. How to select the right LIFL and LIF and then properly train them to secure their villages from insurgent threat draws on the VSO program, but should nonetheless be flexible enough to be used in any country where an insurgency exists. Units that find themselves working with indigenous forces at the local level should reference the steps outlined in this thesis to help ensure they are choosing the best and most compatible indigenous leader and force to partner with. By adhering to such a program, the FMF will not only have an easier time training the LIFL and his force, but will also help to reduce the support base the insurgents have to draw from, as well as aid in setting the conditions for long term stability and prosperity at every level.

FMF Commanders responsible for developing military strategies in COIN conflicts should include in their plan the training of HN forces to become the primary counterinsurgent force in charge of establishing security at the local level. This should include training a cadre of HN forces that can then go on to train their own SOF in how to assess and choose an appropriate LIFL and LIF, as well as how to train them to conduct COIN operations at the village level. In order to expedite this process, these efforts should begin and run concurrently with other FMF efforts. As the concept matures and HN SOF becomes more receptive to learning to conduct COIN on their own, the FMF can begin the transition of authority to the HN.

One final recommendation to FMF Commanders is to consider the use of properly trained home-grown indigenous security forces as a permanent part of national security,

especially in countries where the government is weak and there are not enough existing HN security forces to secure rural outlying areas. To the degree that the right LIFL and force are chosen and trained, this concept can help fill the void created when there is insufficient funding or resourcing to field a large professional security force; too often insurgents can make use of grievances that weak governments unintentionally aid in creating. If local indigenous forces are successful at dislodging insurgents from their villages there is no reason to believe that the insurgents will not return if these forces are disbanded without a replacement. With the correct measures put into place, local forces could remain both credible and accountable to their local and central governments alike indefinitely.

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